



The Clay Trails

Blackwater Woodland, Norden

Free · about **1.4 miles (2.2 km)**, circular · around an hour · 13 stops



THE WOODLAND PATHS

Open every day, all year round, and free.
There is no need to book and nothing to pay.



PURBECK MINING MUSEUM

Open 11.00 to 16.00 on museum days.
Last entry 15.30. Free entry; donations welcome.

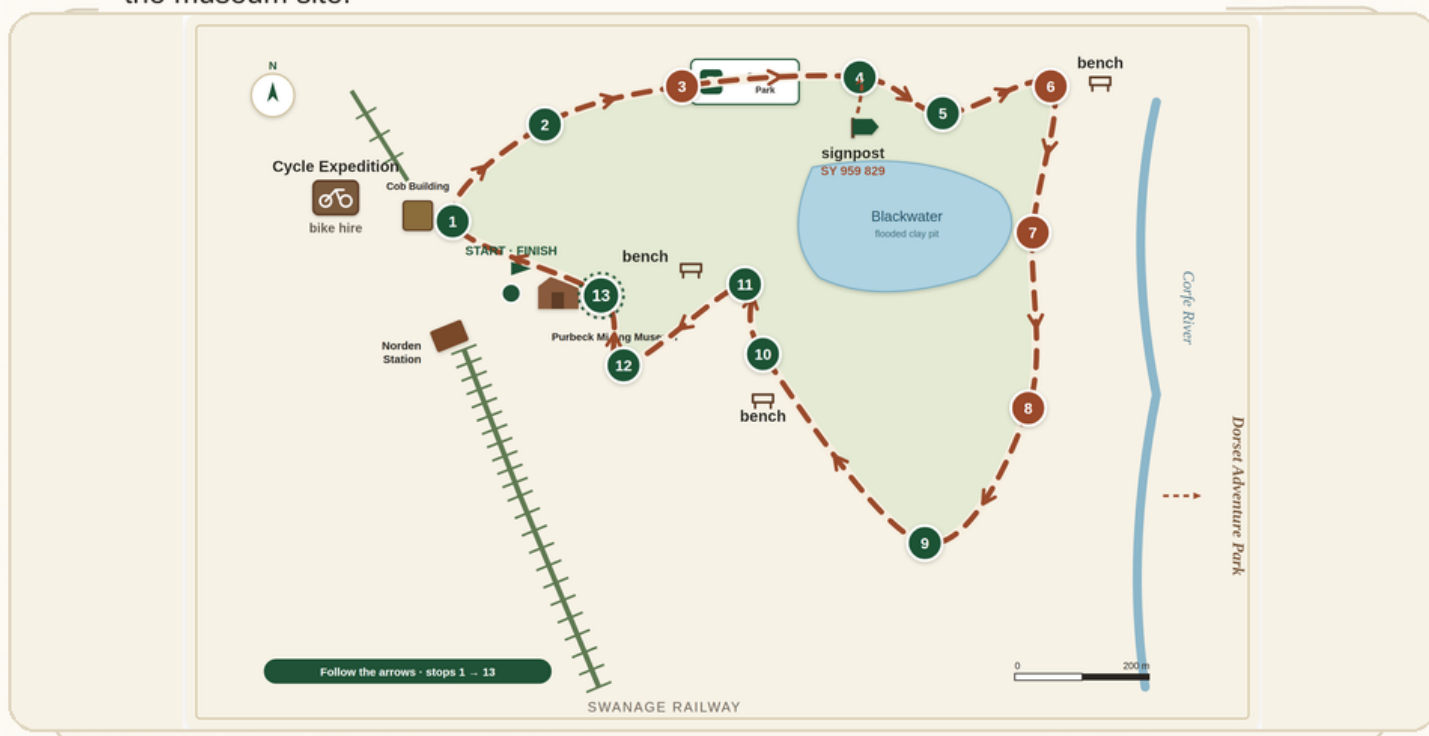


The paths and the museum are separate — the paths are always open; the museum is not.



Finding your way in

Start at Cob Reception in the Purbeck Park car park, beside Norden station, cross the main car park until you reach the signpost SY 959 829 then turn right. Enter the permissive path which is next left. You cannot enter the woodland directly from the museum site.



The Clay Trails loop · Purbeck Park & Blackwater Woodland · schematic, not surveyed



Finding your way out

The trail is circular and returns you to Cob Reception and the car park. To leave part way round, the public footpath runs along the eastern edge of the woodland beside the railway and is open at all times; from there, Corfe Castle and the Purbeck Way are $\frac{3}{4}$ mile.



Please take care. There is no cycling on the trail. Keep to the marked paths — the flooded clay pits are deep and their banks are unstable. Keep children close and dogs under close control, and take your litter home.



THE 13 STOPS

The story at every marker

● Green — industrial heritage

● Terracotta — woodland & wildlife

- 1 The Cob Building**
On the tramway route (1907–1937) that carried clay to Eldon Sidings. Cob is Dorset's mix of clay, soil and stone.
- 2 Purbeck Park Car Park**
Cross the car park in the direction of Corfe Castle
- 3 Blackwater Woodland Permissive Path**
Shaded paths through recovering wood pasture. Oaks over 200 years old; bluebells, then foxgloves, each spring.
- 4 Fayle's Tramway to Goathorn Pier**
Benjamin Fayle's line of 1806 — Dorset's first railway — ran to Middlebere Quay; from 1907 this line served Goathorn Pier.
- 5 Corfe River Viewpoint**
The tramway crossed the river here on a wooden trestle bridge; the line closed in 1937 as war approached.
- 6 Blackwater Low-Level View**
Flooded pits, herons and moorhens — and, if you are lucky, a kingfisher. Darker and quieter than the Blue Pool.
- 7 Hazel Coppice & Corfe Castle View**
From the old spoil heap the view opens south-east to Corfe Castle. Hazel was coppiced for hurdles and basketry.
- 8 Blackwater Woodland Permissive Path**
Managed by the Swanage Railway — heathland rich in ferns, mosses and lichens.
- 9 The Head Shunt Lookout**
The trail's highest point, overlooking the woodland and Blackwater.
- 10 Blackwater Lookout Viewpoint**
The great flooded pit below was worked into the early 1900s, the clay hauled out by steam winch.
- 11 Skew Arch Bridge & Matchams Clay Pit**
Built in 1885 across the Swanage Railway to bring clay across from the Matchams pit and Norden Farm.
- 12 The Narrow-Gauge Railway**
Track relaid over the weathering beds, where clay broke down for six months before use.
- 13 Purbeck Mining Museum — the Reconstructed No.7 Mine ★**
Step underground into a recreated ball clay mine, with authentic equipment from the Purbeck workings. The walk ends here — free entry, donations welcome.



Inside the reconstructed No.7 mine



The woodland path



Blackwater — the flooded clay pit



WILDLIFE ALONG THE WAY

Purbeck's sika deer move quietly through the wood pasture, kingfishers work the still water, and a woodland year runs from bluebells to foxgloves to bracken. Walk quietly at dawn or dusk.



Everyone here is a volunteer

Entry is free and nobody is paid. A suggested **£3 donation** keeps it that way — and with Gift Aid, HMRC adds 25p to every £1.

